

EXPLORE OUR SEASIDE

INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE AND MORE ON THE EASTERN SHORE OF VIRGINIA



VCZMP COASTAL PARTNERS WORKSHOP

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Partners





Across the Chesapeake Bay from metropolitan Hampton Roads, Virginia's Eastern Shore boasts the top of the Delmarva Peninsula. Crisscrossed with small villages, this narrow strip of land stretches for 100 miles the vibrant coastal beauty of marshland, forest, and salt marsh land with tidal creeks, sand flats, shellfish beds and ponds. Along the Shore's coastal margins, a chain of sandy barrier islands, dotted with the remnants of oaks and pines. This historic island and fingers landscape comprises the largest expanse of forested salt marsh remaining on the East Coast and serves as one of the most critical migratory bird habitats on Earth. Through its rich history, the eastern barrier islands have served as hunting and fishing grounds for Native Americans, a safe haven for pirates, and a resort for wealthy travelers. Some islands boast shore bird communities, but frequent visitors occasionally migrated over these sandy islets to the mainland, and some wings of civilization soon to flourish there.

In 2009, The Nature Conservancy began purchasing the 14 islands that make up the heart of its Virginia Coast Reserve, working off development to better protect the conservation of large marine, bird, and coastal. To further the island and adjacent coastal marsh, improve habitat, protect the resources for fish and wildlife the Conservancy turned to acquiring key residential properties, such as Bayside in Pocomoke. This map shows both The Nature Conservancy's conservation projects on the Eastern Shore and the broader context of surrounding conservation lands, including conservation easements, state-owned areas and national wildlife refuges.



- | Conservation Lands | Other Features |
|---|-----------------------|
| ■ TNC Preserve | State/County Boundary |
| ■ TNC Conservation Easement | Major Road |
| ■ Other TNC Project | Other Road |
| ■ VA Eastern Shore Land Trust Easement | |
| ■ Virginia Outdoors Foundation Easement | |
| ■ Other Easement | |
| ■ Federal Land | |
| ■ State Land | |
| ■ Local Park | |
| ■ The Conservation Fund | |
| ■ Ag/Forestral District | |

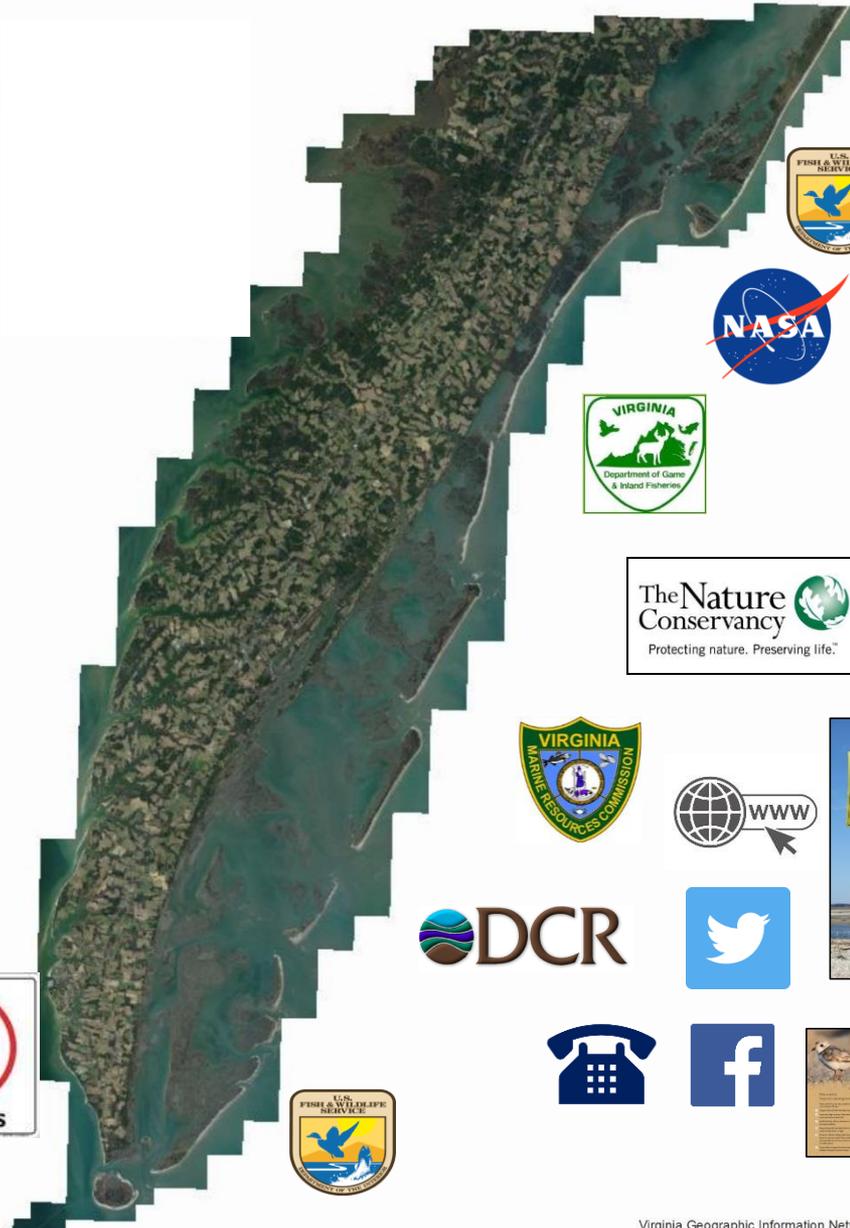


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Data sources: TNC, VA DCR, The Conservation Fund, USGS, USGS

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The Challenge





Project Objective

Develop a series of products designed to communicate recreational/ecotourism opportunities and natural resource information for the Eastern Shore Seaside

- ❖ **KIOSKS**
- ❖ **WEBSITE**
- ❖ **BROCHURES/POSTERS**



KIOSKS



Panel 1 Draft

3-PANEL DESIGN

1. **Big picture, landscape/region, partnerships**
2. **“You are here”; specific access information**
3. **“Beyond the barriers”; highlighting important issues and topics about ocean conservation, connecting land/islands to offshore**



EXPLORE OUR SEASIDE!

Welcome to the Eastern Shore of Virginia "Seaside"! Vast expanses of salt marsh, shallow coastal bays and miles of pristine barrier islands characterize this unique region. This part of Virginia's coast is widely known for its ecological and economic importance, prominence as a living laboratory for cutting edge coastal research, rich cultural history and endless recreational opportunities.

Learn more about the incredible resources that this region supports and the partners dedicated to its management and protection as you "Explore Our Seaside!" Learn more at our website: exploreourseaside.org

OFFERING ADVENTURES

Virginia's Seaside offers endless opportunities for those in search of coastal wilderness adventures. Visitors can paddle along secluded marsh creeks, explore remote barrier island beaches, test their fishing and hunting skills or simply observe and enjoy the peaceful surroundings. Remember that the marshes and islands are owned by public and private entities and there are visitation policies in place to protect sensitive natural resources.

PROVIDING HABITAT

The mosaic of habitats on Virginia's Seaside supports an incredible diversity of wildlife and plants. This unique area is recognized as one of the most important places for migratory birds within the entire Western Hemisphere and an Audubon Important Bird Area.

BUILDING RESILIENCY

The creeks and coastal bays are home to some of the most successful marine habitat restoration projects in the world. For almost two decades, Seaside partners have worked together to restore oyster reefs and seagrass meadows. These robust marine habitats are crucial for a resilient coastal system able to provide important services for natural and human communities alike.

PROTECTING OUR MAINLAND

Virginia's Seaside is home to the longest expanse of undeveloped barrier islands along the eastern seaboard of the United States. This naturally functioning coastal system of islands, salt marshes, tidal mudflats, and shallow bays are the first line of defense for our Eastern Shore communities when it comes to storms, hurricanes and flooding.

SUPPORTING TRADITIONAL ECONOMIES

Working waterfronts along Virginia's Seaside are the hubs for several traditional water-based economies. Clam aquaculture is a booming industry that provides fresh shellfish from these waters to destinations across the country. In fact, Virginia's Eastern Shore is the top hard clam producer in the United States. Many watermen still work the seaside for wild shellfish harvest as well and can be seen dotted across the landscape at low tide. No matter what the catch, these industries are thriving in this unique natural setting surrounding by protected lands and clean water.

THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS

The seaside of Virginia's Eastern Shore is almost entirely owned and managed by NGO (non-profit, private), state and federal agencies. Although different in many ways, these partners share common goals related to the protection of the natural resources of the seaside balanced with sustainable recreational and economic use. Learn more at exploreourseaside.org.

KIOSKS





Metompkin Island

Metompkin Island

Owned and managed by: [The Nature Conservancy/Virginia Coast Reserve](#) and the [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#).

Metompkin Island is open to the public for low-impact, recreational day use, such as hiking, bird watching, surf fishing and photography. Please help protect sensitive habitats and wildlife by observing all visitation policies and seasonal restrictions.

Visitation policies

Open for recreational DAY use:



Prohibited at ALL times:

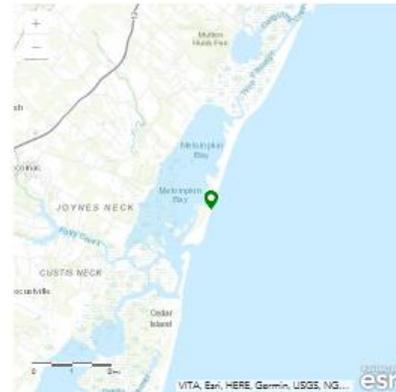


Seasonal restrictions (April through September 1):

- ✓ Remain at the water's edge and below the high tide line at all times in all areas to avoid bird nesting habitat.
- ✓ Do not walk on or traverse upper beaches, dunes or mudflats.
- ✓ Respect posted bird nesting areas.

For information about our policies, please contact the Virginia Coast Reserve office at (757) 442-8049.

- 📅 Check the tide schedule
- ☁️ Check the weather
- 🔍 [View our Frequently Asked Questions](#)



Suggested access points

Primary access points on Metompkin Island include the inlet beaches at the north and south end of the island and the middle of the island. During the bird nesting season (April – August), visitors should access the ocean beach only via the inlet beaches or roped corridors provided. Please contact The Nature Conservancy or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to confirm corridor locations.



Questions?